The Reconstructionist

Vol. XIII. December 26, 1947 Tebet 13, 5708 No. 17

- ***IS THE DIASPORA AN ABNORMALITY?***

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  by Immanuel Lewy

dicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of rael's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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The Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

UNBENEVOLENT NEUTRALITY

IN OUR last issue we rejoiced over the decision of the United Nations to establish a Jewish state in at least a part of Palestine. We still rejoice in that decision. It was a great moral victory for our cause. But we are frankly apprehensive that it will remain only a *moral* victory, an endorsement of Jewish aims by the world's conscience, without a serious endeavor to implement that endorsement.

We grant that the problem of implementation is a difficult one. The violence that has flared up was not unexpected. Much as we deplore the shedding of blood as the price of our victory—Arab blood as well as Jewish blood—if that is the price which our enemies insist on, it must be paid. We are struggling for the very right of our people to live in the land to which they have a claim that has twice been acknowledged as valid by the nations of the world. That our intentions are pacific and not aggressive has been demonstrated by our willingness to surrender our title to the greater part of Palestine as a peace-offering to the Arab world. Will the nations who have endorsed our right to that tiny portion of the world's surface permit the Arab states, which have more land than they know what to do with, to rob us of that meagre portion?

We can understand the reluctance of our country or of any other to take direct military action against the Arab pogromists. Nor are we asking for that. What makes us apprehensive is the unfriendly "neutrality" of the Great Powers in the face of Arab aggression and British obstruction.

ARAB aggression we need not prove. The Arabs have done that for us. Throughout the discussion of the problem, their basic argument was the threat of just such measures as they are now endeavoring to carry out. They are openly recruiting volunteers and sending weapons to be put at the disposal of the Palestine Arab bandits. They not only admit their aggressive intentions; they proclaim them and have been proclaiming them all along.

Need we prove British obstruction? Herschel V. Johnson of the American delegation to the United Nations Assembly openly charged Great Britain with obstruction in the course of the debates. How can one account for the following facts by any other rational explanation than that Great Britain is pursuing a deliberately obstructive policy:

Partition was originally a British suggestion for solving the difficulties between

Jews and Arabs. It was first proposed in the report of the Peel Commission in 1937. Nevertheless, Great Britain refused to accept partition when it was suggested by the Jewish Agency after British rejection of the Anglo-American Committee's report. Her contention then was that she could not enforce it single-handed. She then submitted the problem to the UN. But when UNSCOP presented a partition plan which was to be implemented through the United Nations, she refused to vote for it on the theory that she could only vote for a plan which would be acceptable to both Jews and Arabs, although she had previously declared that only an imposed solution was a possibility. Even after being assured that an international police force would assume responsibility for maintaining order in Palestine, she would still not give the plan her support. She opposed the proposal for a step-by-step withdrawal from Palestine territory, to take place simultaneously with the United Nations Commission's taking charge of the evacuated districts; she insisted on her complete authority over the whole of Palestine until the date she chose for terminating her Mandate within the time provided by the UN resolution, a decision contrary to the resolutions adopted by the UN Assembly. She has gone further than that. She has virtually forbidden the United Nations Commission, which will have to take over the problem of keeping order in Palestine after the British evacuation, from coming to the country until two weeks before her surrender of the Mandate. This leaves the Commission no time to work out effective plans on the spot for resisting aggression.

Great Britain still has the Mandate and the responsibility for maintaining order and facilitating the establishment of the Jewish National Home. What is she doing to discharge her responsibilities under that Mandate of which she is so reluctant to waive a single prerogative in order to cooperate with the UN? How is she protecting the Jews against Arab aggression? She treats all "violence" by Jews and by Arabs as equally "criminal" and disarms Jewish defenders and Arab aggressors alike. But she uses Transjordan Arabs to police the roads on which Jews depend for bringing food to the cities, Arabs whom she has equipped, armed and trained, and who have again and again sniped at Jews. She will not used armored cars to convoy food trucks of Jews on the roads, nor allow Jews to use armored cars, but insists on their riding in open cars where their drivers are constantly exposed to Arab sniping. We are not in a position to judge of individual instances in which police or soldiers under British command are alleged to have shot at Jews in Palestine, but the fact remains that Great Britain is not discharging even her Mandatory obligation for maintaining order. She is, in fact, putting deliberate obstacles in the way of arming the Jews in defense of the rights accorded to them by the UN, and of enabling the UN Commission to gather first hand information on what is going on in the land. If that is not obstruction, what is?

And what about our own country? Was this the time for our government to declare a virtual embargo on arms to both Arabs and Jews? Is the United States, after having consistently supported partition in the United Nations Assembly, to make no distinction between those who try by violence to defeat the considered judgment of the world and those who, although at a great sacrifice, have accepted the world's verdict and are prepared to abide by it? Why has not our country's voice been raised in vigor-

ous admonition against the Arab states, themselves members of the United Nations, for their disloyal attempts to wreck the plans of that organization by riot and massacre?

And why have most of the nations who are to be represented on the United Nations Commission for Palestine not yet named their representatives? What are they waiting for? What sinister influences are again, as during the debates in the United Nations Assembly, attempting in secret to sabotage the works of the United Nations?

LET the United Nations beware! Let it learn from the experience of the League of Nations. When that body maintained neutrality in the face of Japanese aggression in Manchukuo and Italian aggression in Ethiopia, it lost all its authority. From that time on, it became moribund. The Arab aggression is not merely an aggression against Jews; it is an aggression against the world and, more especially, against the Western World. The Arabs object to a Jewish state because it would be an outpost of Western civilization in a region otherwise dominated by Moslem religion.

We should not take the threat of a "holy war" as an idle one. Moslem religion was spread by the sword. It does not sanction the separation of Church and State. When a Moslem state declares a holy war, it is the absolute duty of every Moslem who is faithful to Islam to support it. Mohammedanism is like Shintoism in demanding the absolute submission of the individual to the state religion. Moslem religion can, if the aggressive plans of Pan-Arab rulers are not checked, lead to an Arab-sponsored Pearl Harbor.

Does that sound fantastic? At present it does, but so would a prediction of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor have sounded a generation ago. The time to stop aggression is before it grows to menacing proportions. The Arab attack on the Jews, if successful, would surely nurture ambitious schemes of Moslem conquest, just as Hitler's successful support of Franco in Spain fed his lust for further adventures in aggression.

If the United Nations and those Great Powers who see in the United Nations an instrument for world peace do not wish a repetition of what happened to the League of Nations, they must abandon their present neutrality as between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and show a willingness to use sanctions to enforce UN's Palestine policy against aggressors. The least they can do is to facilitate the arming of Haganah by enabling it to purchase the weapons it needs for the defense of the Yishuv. Their adopting such a policy and publicly proclaiming it may prove an effective measure for the pacification of Palestine; isolationist embargos and declarations of "neutrality" are an invitation to attack.

NAMING THE JEWISH STATE

THE first book of the Torah does not mention the name of any person or place of importance without trying to explain it. A name is not only a mark of identification, but a symbol and a prayer. It is the succinct condensation of all the associations, good wishes and expectations of the name-giver in the moment when he is coining the name. When choosing a name for the new Jewish State, we may follow this precedent.

The name of a Jewish State, everybody will agree, must be a Hebrew one. Therefore, such names as West Palestine or

Jewish Palestine, intelligible and unambiguous as they may be, are excluded.

What about Judea? That is a Hebrew name and a euphonious one. It was used under the Maccabeans and Romans. Unfortunately it is just the part of Palestine to which the term Judea was originally applied, that will not become ours. The Hebrew word for Judean, moreover, is *Yehudi,* the same as Jew. It would not be an act of political wisdom to call the Moslems and Christians of the new Jewish State, Jews.

The name Ivria has also been suggested. We call our language Hebrew, *Ivrith.* In Genesis 40:16, Joseph calls Palestine, *Eretz Haivrim,* land of the Hebrews. If we called the land Ivria, we would be using a name that would not sound strange in any of the Western languages, since it resembles such names as Bolivia, Bulgaria or Rumania. One objection to the name is that, in the Bible, the name *Hebrew* is applied not only to Israelites but also to other descendants of Abraham, among whom the Ishmaelites or Arab tribes are included. We should give our Jewish State a name which marks this land as ours.

Since the movement which has inaugurated the creation of a Jewish State calls itself Zionism, Zion suggests itself as a possible name. Zion is a Jewish symbol with spiritual connotations. In traditional usage, however, the name, which originally designated only the Temple area, is applied to the city of Jerusalem rather than to the country as a whole. Unfortunately, Jerusalem is not part of our State. To meet this objection, a variation of the name has been proposed—Zionland. This name for the future Jewish State is already found in an essay, written by Martin Buber in 1901. Zionland would, in Hebrew, be *Eretz Tzion.* It would have its parallel in such names as England, Poland or Ireland. The inhabitants would be called Zionites to distinguish them from Zionists. In Hebrew they might be called *Artzim,* an adjective derived from the first part of the name. The name is flexible enough for all kinds of derivatives. So you may form a verb "zionize" or an adjective like *Zionic,* corresponding to Brittanic or Gallic.. It is also brief and lofty, associated with our happiest past and our Messianic hopes for the even better future.

In this magazine, we have been using the name Eretz Yisrael. Like Zion and Zionland, it has significant spiritual implications. The most important spiritual declarations of Jewish faith begins with the words, *"Shema Yisrael"* and the name Eretz Yisrael would emphasize the spiritual function of the land as uniting all Israel in the service of the one God of all mankind. As the name Yisrael is interpreted in Genesis 32:25-33, Eretz Yisrael would mean the land of our spiritual struggles in which we wrested the divine blessing. Such a name would be a symbol and a prayer. Moreover it has the advantage of usage both in our classic literature and in current Hebrew vernacular. The name is now used on postage stamps, coins and official documents.

To be sure it has also its disadvantages. It is somewhat long and, in transliteration, has a bizarre look, but not more so than Czechoslovakia, to which we have grown accustomed. It was once applied to the whole of Palestine, but as we have already seen, no geographic designation that has any tradition back of it was applied in its original intent, exclusively to the territory assigned for the Jewish State. At least, the name Eretz Yisrael always included that territory. Perhaps the most serious difficulty with the name is that it is not easy to derive from it a name for the population of the new state. They cannot be called Israelites, because

that name has already been pre-empted by the Jewish people as a whole. To call them *Artzi-Yisraelim,* as they are frequently called in modern Hebrew, or Eretzisraelites in English would be awkward. Perhaps we might use the colloquial *Artzi,* as suggested in connection with the name *Eretz Tzion,* or even Zionite. It does not necessarily follow that the name of the people must be derived from the name of the land. Our country is the United States of America, but we refer to our people as Americans, not United Statesians.

All the names passed in review have their advantages and disadvantages. Can any of our readers suggest a name better than any of those so far proposed? We Jews are like expectant parents who want to start off the child about to be born to them on his career with a good name. How do you think we should name the Jewish State about to be born?

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MRS. Vashti McCollum has become the center of a controversy which has been taken to the Supreme Court of the United States. Mrs. McCollum, who is an atheist, sought to have the courts prohibit religious instruction in the public schools. She lost the case in the County Court, and her suit was denied on appeal by the Supreme Court of Illinois. The case then went to the highest court in the land.

The issue raised by her case is of such moment, that, for the first time, all the organized forces of Jewish opinion in the field of community relations have been mobilized to meet it. Both the Synagogue Council and the National Community Relations Advisory Council, though opposed to atheism, decided to file a joint brief, as friends of the court, in support of Mrs. McCollum's position.

The question is not a new one. Religious educators have been grappling with it for decades. On the one hand, the fact that despite the efforts of the religious denominations, thousands of children receive no religious education whatsoever constitutes a genuine problem. The absence of religion from the curriculum of the public schools inevitably gives the child the impression that religion is a non-essential element in our American culture, thus making of the public school an indirect ally of atheism.

On the other hand there is the danger of sectarian instruction in the school. Such instruction always puts minority faiths at a disadvantage, and subjects the children of their adherents to the feeling of not "belonging," out of which dangerous complexes can develop. The traditional American separation of church and state was specifically designed to give all religious denominations equal treatment without putting any particular denomination at an advantage. Were that tradition not to be respected in the public schools, children belonging to minority faiths would always be subject to intentional or unintentional discrimination.

The situation in Champaign, Illinois, against which Mrs. McCollum is protesting, is one in which the school authorities provide for religious instruction in the school building through an interfaith organization representing Protestants, Catholics and Jews, the children of each faith being instructed separately by religious leaders of that faith. Mrs. McCollum is an atheist who objects to her child's receiving religious instruction in any of these faiths and charges that he is being subjected to exclusion and humiliation in consequence. In schools with only a small number of Jewish children, the effect of such an arrangement on the Jewish child would be similarly devastating. That is why Jewish organizations, although op-

posed to atheism, are backing up Mrs. McCollum's protest against sectarian encroachment on the public school system as contrary to the constitutional provisions for religious freedom.

But even if Mrs. McCollum wins her point, and denominational instruction is banned from the school buildings, in school time, only very naive people will believe that the problem has been solved. Certain aspects of Christian civilization and religion are so deeply entrenched in the school program that any attempt to dislodge them would be quixotic. Such indeed was the effort of Assistant Superintendent Isaac Bildersee, in New York, to ban the singing of Christmas carols in the schools under his jurisdiction. School vacations revolve around Christmas and Easter; Christmas trees adorn every school and the Christmas "spirit" pervades all of them. Dr. Bildersee's ban was quickly rescinded when it became apparent that a violent storm was brewing.

The realities of the situation are that the overwhelming majority of Christians, although they may tolerate a ban on sectarian religious instruction in the public schools, will not tolerate the removal of certain basic observances — like Christmas and the reading of the Bible in assemblies — from the schools. They will justify such observances on the ground that they are celebrations or exercises of general cultural value rather than religious rites and that it would be fairer to excuse the children of the minorities from participating in these celebrations if they have religious scruples, than to deny to the majority of children the opportunity to observe them. The best we can hope to accomplish is to have our Christian neighbors recognize *all* the realities, and not only those which touch them immediately. The other realities are that the American people is composed of many religious groups, and nationality and ethnic groups. If the schools are to be truly representative, they should include in their observances the customs of many peoples and many religions.

They would then accomplish two purposes. First, they would be helping to promote real good will. Those who feel left out of the majority observance will be granted recognition for being what they are. Second, they would be promoting inter-cultural education. When people of different faiths and cultures have to live and work together, they should have more opportunity of becoming acquainted with one another's traditions under conditions of mutual respect. When many different observances are conducted in the schools, all such observances tend to become more like demonstrations than like actual religious rites; they become instructive rather than propagandist.

This proposal too is not new, nor is it without its dangers. Jewish children who would not be receiving a supplementary Jewish education in a good Hebrew school might get some very distorted notions about Jewish religion. They might be led to imagine, for example, that Hanukkah is "the Jewish Christmas" and Pesah, "the Jewish Easter," while Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur which do not happen to coincide with any season of celebration in the public school are of minor importance. But at least the child who gets a Jewish supplementary education will get a lift from feeling that what he learns in his Hebrew school can be utilized by him in his public school in ways that will win him the recognition and applause of his Christian as well as his Jewish classmates.

But the ultimate solution of the problem of religion in the public schools calls for a more fundamental treatment than any of those so far proposed. The kind of religion that should be taught need not and should not be related to the traditional

of any of the historic religious communities. The responsibility for maintaining those traditions must rest on the churches and the synagogues. The religion taught in the schools should be based on American experience. It should enable children to give a religious interpretation to American history, one that would derive spiritual and ethical values from it in the way in which the Bible derives them from the history of ancient Israel. Such American religion would sanctify the great personalities, scenes, documents, symbols of American life and would observe American national holidays by religious exercises that have no specific dependence on any of the rituals of the historic religions.

This solution of the problem of religion in the public schools would preserve the intent of the original separation of church and state and be an influence for democratic unity.

REALITIES AND VALUES

MANY JEWS ARE NO DOUBT disturbed by the sensational accounts of Arab-Jewish clashes in Eretz Yisrael. If they are worried, we hope that they will give expression to their anxiety by liberal aid to Americans for Haganah in its efforts to obtain funds for procuring heavy equipment such as armored cars and airplanes. As explained by Theodore Kollek, a Haganah leader now in this country, "Light arms can be manufactured literally underground, but not armored cars."

At the same time, Mr. Kollek gives us some very encouraging assurances as to the ultimate outcome of the struggle. At a press conference on December 8, he predicted that the present stage of guerilla activity would be over within a few days. He pointed out that mobs are very easy to raise in towns, in Palestine as elsewhere, but that, in over 1,000 villages, the Arabs have not moved against the Jews. On the contrary, there have been any number of peace pacts entered into between Arab and Jewish neighboring villages. He did not regard the likelihood of civil war great, though he admitted that the Jewish state would face greater danger when the British withdraw.

Space does not permit quoting the grounds for his optimistic estimate, but there can be no doubt that he knows whereof he speaks.

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Jewish Affairs, THE ORGAN OF the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, calls attention to the fact that 2,000 Polish Jewish *agunot* — wives whose husbands cannot be traced—though they have every reason to believe that their husbands were dead as a result of the war or the German efforts at genocide, are prevented from remarrying because of the absence of an eye-witness to testify to the death of their husbands. They threaten that, if the Polish rabbinate does not act, they will take "independent action."

So now the Polish rabbis are consulting rabbis in Eretz Yisrael and other countries. Chief Rabbi Herzog of Palestine, commenting on the endeavor to publish a collection of the principal responsa, *Otzar Haposekim,* which is being prepared, recently said: "The satisfactory solution of difficult problems affecting Jewish law requires a thorough mastery of the vast literature of rabbinical responsa of all ages. This has been fully realized by rabbinical authorities today when they are faced with the cases of thousands of unfortunate *agunot,* survivors of the European catastrophe."

On which the London Jewish Chronicle properly comments: "This is excellent news as far as it goes, but must we wait for a lengthy period to elapse, during which the dozen volumes of *Otzar Ha-*

posekim can be compiled, before our contemporary rabbis can issue an authoritative pronouncement to meet the needs of the present time?"

Must we wait? Perhaps the Polish women had better take their "independent action."

▼

ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS New Service, more than a score of young women are enrolled in a three-year course for clergymen's wives at the University of the South, an Episcopalian college in Sewanee, Tenn.

We wonder how our *rabbetzins* would take to the suggestion that they go to school for three years to learn how to be helpful to their husbands in the rabbinate.

We have the feeling that some of them would be inclined to say, "I married a man, not a profession." A number of them have professions of their own and would resent the implication that being the wife of a rabbi is itself a profession.

On the other hand, many a rabbi's wife who is baffled by the multiplicity of demands that congregations, legitimately or not, make on the *rebbetzin* might be grateful for an opportunity to get specialized training on how to satisfy those demands.

▼

THE REV. JAMES D. HISHEN, a Chicago pastor, has been conducting a campaign against indecent and crime comics. Under his inspiration, a ten-year old girl attending the St. Gall parochial school suggested that the children be asked to bring their comics to be burned in a public bonfire. She and a boy of twelve went from class to class asking the pupils to give up their books of comics. As many as 2,000 "bad" comics were burned by the 600 pupils of the school.

We have no doubt that the children enjoyed the bonfire—after having enjoyed the comics. Probably, when they grow up, they will be burning bigger and better books and persecuting publishers whose literary product does not meet with their approval.

▼

OUR RABBINIC AND CONGREGAgational bodies have frequently adopted resolutions on problems of social justice, but they have not done much in developing techniques by which ethical social attitudes can be given effective expression through religious organizations.

In this respect the Quakers are far in advance of us. The following project, which they call 'internes-in-industry,' is an interesting example of originality in social technique.

The project combines work in an industrial plant with study, informal discussion and cooperative living (*kibbutz* fashion). The object is to discover human and just solutions to problems arising from industrial disputes.

The internes find their own jobs at prevailing rates of pay in Philadelphia industry. Living costs are reduced to $12.00 weekly by cooperative measures.

Recreational activities by the internes are intended to offset the monotony of their daily work. Twice each week they hear representatives of labor, education and management speak on their problems.

▼

ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT trends in modern religion seems to be the increased attention that churches of all denominations are giving to social problems. The days when it was easy for atheists to dispose of religion as a mere opiate are over. No doubt the danger to religion from communism, fascism and other social heresies has recalled the churches to their social responsibilities.

These thoughts were suggested by the followng two items, which are typical of many others that one might cull from

(*Continued on Page* 22)

Is the Diaspora An Abnormality?

By EUGENE KOHN

THE prospect of the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael brings to a head an issue that has long been argued among Zionists, the issue of *hiyyuv hagalut* vs *shelilat hagalut,* of the affirmation vs. the denial of the value of the Diaspora to Jewish life. Until now the question was more or less academic, since there was agreement on both sides that, until we had a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael, the development of as intensive a Jewish life as possible in the Diaspora was desirable. The ultimate solution of the problem was therefore one which could be safely left to the future.

But that future moment which will have to be decisive is now at hand, and the way we envisage the ultimate future will mainly determine how we will act in the present. An analogy will make clear what the practical issue now is.

A Question That Calls for Immediate Decision

It frequently happens in war that a particular sector of the front is sorely beset. The general staff will then have to determine its strategy by its answer to the question: Can the sector hold out? If there is no hope at all of its ability to hold out, the obvious procedure would be to try to withdraw as many troops and as much matériel as possible from that sector and to concentrate them on some other more defensible front. Whatever could not be withdrawn would have to be sacrificed as "expendable." If, on the other hand, a diagnosis of the situation would show that there is a chance of saving the sector, then the attempt would be made to give it whatever reenforcement was available.

The question therefore is: Is the position of Jewry in the Diaspora at all tenable? Those who take a pessimistic view of the possibilities of life in the Diaspora, argue that the Dispersion, as such, is an abnormality. No modern nation, they point out, has ever succeeded in retaining the permanent loyalty of its nationals who have migrated to other countries. If the Jews want to be a normal nation, they must concentrate in their own land.

What We Mean by 'Normality'

Before we attempt, however, to go into the question of the normality or abnormality of the Diaspora, we have to clarify the nature of the question. We must make a distinction between the assertion that for a people to have a Diaspora is intrinsically abnormal and the assertion that Jewish life in the Diaspora as it exists today is abnormal. The question whether the appendix is a normal organ of a man's body is not affected by the question of whether he happens to have appendicitis. It would be hard indeed to argue that Jewish life in America today is normal. We see too many pathological symptoms of Jewish self-hate, too many efforts to seek escape from Judaism, to be able to regard the condition of Jewish life in America today—and the same holds true for other Diaspora countries—as normal. But that condition need not remain as it is. It may improve. It certainly is not convincing evidence that the mere existence of a Diaspora constitutes an abnormality.

A second point thta needs to be cleared up, if we are to discuss the issue intelligently, is what we mean by *normal.* There are two sensse in which the term is commonly used. The *normal* is often

used synonymously with the usual, with whatever conforms to the prevailing *norm* or standard of judgment. According to that definition, there is no particular virtue in being normal. On the contrary, it is almost impossible to be original, independent, and creative if one is *normal* in that sense. For any departure from accepted opinions, or conventional standards of value would stamp one as abnormal, regardless of whether one's opinions be true or one's standards just. By that conception of normality, the Prophets, for example, were extremely abnormal people.

Another usage of the term, and one which we can accept for the purposes of this discussion, would equate the *normal* with the *healthy*. Health is a desideratum. And if, when we speak of health, we are not considering merely health of the body but health of the mind and the emotions, a health which has reference not merely to the individual but to the entire social organism, normality becomes not only a desideratum but *the* desideratum, the *summum bonum* of human life. The Hebrew language has a good word for that kind of normality; it is the word *shalom,* for though *shalom* is commonly translated *peace,* the root idea of the concept *shalom* is *wholeness, health, normality.*

Now, if we use the term *normal* in this sense, it is at once apparent that there is no absolutely normal society. Only the Kingdom of God would measure up to such a standard. Neither with nor without a Diaspora could the Jewish people achieve that perfect normality.

Nevertheless, normality in the sense of health remains valid as an ideal. The Kingdom of Heaven may not be actual, but it exists in the hearts and minds of men and hence serves as a standard or *norm* by which to measure the relative normality of a society. *That society may be considered as normal, which, under the necessary conditions of life today, utilizes its resources, material and spiritual, to the best advantage in enhancing the life of its members and of mankind in general.* Without reference both to universal human values on the one hand and on the other, to the specific conditions of life as it is and will remain for the foreseeable future, it is idle to discuss whether a sociological phenomenon like the Diaspora is or is not *normal.*

In this sense, the continued existence of the Diaspora and the effort to strengthen Diaspora Judaism are entirely normal. In fact the attempt to liquidate the Diaspora and to confine Jewish life to the territorial limits of Eretz Yisrael would be abnormal. It would threaten the very survival of the Jewish people and of Judaism.

Is the Prevailing Type of Nationalism Normal?

This becomes apparent when we consider some of the conditioning factors of the situation which must be reckoned with in deciding the issue. Most countries today operate, it is true, with a territorial conception of nationhood, which regards the earth as parceled out among mutually exclusive nations, each responsible for the welfare only of those residing within its territorial limits, over whom it exercises exclusive sovereignty. Migration and even travel across national boundaries is being made exceedingly difficult, and each nation determines for itself the terms on which it shall enter into relations with other nations. If the normal were to be regarded as synonymous with the conventional and accepted, then, indeed, it would be abnormal for a nation to have both a homeland and a diaspora.

But is the existing form of nationalism normal in the sense of being sound and life-enhancing? To this the answer is, *no.*

Only on the heretical assumption of fascism, that the individual exists for the state, can we justify the common form of exclusive, territorial nationalism. Our world has become so small through the invention of modern means of communication and transit, that it is oppressive to retain the present barriers to freedom of movement and to rights of residence. Nor is it any longer sensible, if it ever was, to demand that whoever, for personal reasons, chooses to take up residence in some other country than that of his birth must foreswear all further interest in the country of his origin. "Something there is that does not love a wall." The modern form of nationalism, in which nations glare hostilely at one another from behind barriers of unilaterally determined tariff regulations and immigration restrictions, does not, in the atomic age, make for *shalom,* either in the narrower sense of "peace" or in the wider sense of welfare, or normality. Judging by modern experience, "good walls" do not "make good neighbors."

When in addition to these general considerations, we examine the conditioning factors in the life of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael and in the Diaspora, it should be apparent that the interests of the Yishuv, of Diaspora Jewry, and of mankind in general are better served by the program of retaining and strengthening the Diaspora than by the program of its liquidation.

Why Eretz Yisrael Needs the Diaspora

Let us look at it first from the viewpoint of Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael is a small country. Even according to the most optimistic estimates, the Jewish state will never be able to absorb all of the 12,000,000 Jews remaining in the world today. It is absurd to think of it as ever being independent in the sense of being self-sufficient. Even powerful nations like the United States cannot, in the modern world, regard themselves as self-sufficient. Although America's foreign trade is relatively small in proportion to its domestic commerce, the falling off of our exports when European nations began recovering from the effects of World War I, was an important factor in bringing about the depression of the early 30's. How much less could Eretz Yisrael maintain itself as a completely independent nation.

That is no reflection on the land nor on its people. The land has sufficient resources to provide a reasonably prosperous existence for millions of Jews, probably for all who find an urgent need to immigrate. Politically the Yishuv has passed every reasonable test that could be applied to its capacity for self-government *summa cum laude.* And culturally, it has performed miracles in the revival of the Hebrew language and literature, in music and the arts.

But, in the modern world, *nations must rely on interdependence rather than on independence for their survival.* Eretz Yisrael owes its very opportunity for statehood to the United Nations. In future political issues it will continue to need the friendly understanding of its problems by the Great Powers. Will it not be an advantage at such times to have in those countries influential Jewish communities which, though politically owing no allegiance to the Jewish state, will be sympathetic to its people and their legitimate political interests.

Economically as well, Eretz Yisrael would benefit by the continued existence of the Diaspora. The Yishuv would need foreign markets for its goods and, at least at the beginning, a certain amount of foreign credit. The tourist trade would be an important asset in a country which, like Switzerland, does not have many of the basic economic resources for big in-

dustry. In meeting all these needs, the Diaspora would be helpful to the new nation.

Culturally, also, Eretz Yisrael needs the Diaspora. Culture cannot be severed from economics. Overlooking, for the time being, the value of cultural cross-fertilization, of which more will be said in another connection, it is plain that the producers of literature, music and art, no less than producers of textiles or soap, need a market for their wares. The shrinkage of the Jewish population to the numbers that could be accommodated within the Jewish state would mean a serious shrinkage of the market for Eretz Yisrael's cultural products. The spiritual reenforcement of the Diaspora, on the other hand, would involve a great expansion of that market. Moreover, since artists are even more moved by the desire for fame than by the incentive of financial remuneration, the prospect of having their works made available to the gentile world by Diaspora Jewry would certainly stimulate their cultural creativity. But if Jewish culture is confined to the population of the Jewish state and permitted to become extinct elsewhere with the liquidation of the Diaspora, the cultural creativity of Eretz Yisrael is bound to dwindle.

The Fate of the Diaspora Jews Under a Policy of Negation

Now let us ask ourselves what would happen to the Jews of the Diaspora if the negators of the value of the Diaspora were to succeed in carrying out the program indicated by their reasoning. Before we can do so, we must, however, call attention to two contradictory arguments with which they defend their position.

It is sometimes argued that the xenophobia aroused by the Jews is so strong that any people, when it arrives at national self-consciousness, must develop anti-Semitism. Who has not heard Zionist propagandists hold out the experience of German Jewry as an example? No Jews, we are repeatedly told, ever identified themselves more completely with the culture and the general interests of the people among whom they lived than the German Jews. And see what happened to them! The Jews as a ubiquitous minority are everywhere the most ready scapegoats when anything goes wrong. And in what country can we be sure of permanent peace and prosperity? Today we already see strong anti-Semitic groups in England and America and the likelihood that Jews will continue to be tolerated is very slight. So runs one argument.

The other argument declares that Jewish survival until now was due to Jews' having been segregated by the xenophobia of the Gentiles, but that, given a chance to participate freely in the political, economic and cultural life of the democratic nations, Jews are bound to be assimilated, except in their homeland. No other nationality group in America, for example, fails to intermarry with the rest of the population and eventually to be absorbed by it. The pressure of the majority culture is too strong to permit of the survival of a minority culture for any legth of time.

When one considers either of these arguments by itself, each has a measure of plausibility, but put them together, and one tends to cancel the other. If anti-Semitism is bound to be intensified, assimilation would then be impossible. The lot of the Jews in the Diaspora might indeed become intolerable, but, as we have already seen, Eretz Yisrael could not possibly absorb all of them. Barring a successful program of genocide, which even Hitler with all his diabolic cunning was not quite able to effect, the Jews would

then again have to live a sort of ghetto existence. If we are interested in enabling all Jews to live normal lives, would it be normal to regard the millions of Jews in the Diaspora as expendable and of no account? Would it not be more normal for the Yishuv to assist Diaspora Jews in their struggle against the rising tide of anti-Semitism and to help them make their life in their ghettos worthwhile?

But let us suppose that the pessimistic forecast is incorrect, that the relations of Jews and Gentiles, instead of deteriorating, will improve. If we believe in the future of democracy, we indeed must regard such an improvement as likely, however long the process may take. With no anti-Semitism to segregate the Jews, with all barriers to his assimilation removed, is it reasonable to expect that the Jew will not be assimilated by his friendly environment?

Let us admit that such assimilation is a possibility. It is by no means, however, a certainty. For one of the most compelling motives for assimilation is the attempt to escape the ignominy of belonging to a despised minority. But if that minority is respected rather than despised, the motive of escape would not operate. Why should not Jews adhere to Judaism if it means belonging to a people with a great spiritual heritage from the past, with cultural ties to a modern state that is creative of original social, aesthetic and religious values, and with fraternal ties with Jews in all parts of the world? Is it normal for Jews who have every opportunity to live a free Jewish communal life and be respected for doing so, to repudiate their spiritual heritage? There are many small sects in America, like the Quakers, who retain their communal ties and distinctive interests and activities although there is no bar to their acceptance or assimilation. And since Judaism is more than a mere religious denomination, since it is a religious civilization, that would make it all the more worthwhile for its adherents to retain their Jewish identity.

For the immediate future, however, it is safest to assume that Jewish life in democratic countries will have to encounter a certain antipathy, making Jews want to escape from their Jewish affiliations, but not enough of active persecution or oppression to make most Jews want either to give up their Judaism or to migrate from their present homes. To a certain extent their position is abnormal. A minority group is always handicapped, not only materially but spiritually. The tendency to develop a Jewish inferiority complex with all its unhealthy manifestations is very real. But what is the cure for such a condition? Modern psychiatry has shown that handicapped persons need not succumb to frustration. They frequently make a wholesome adjustment to their handicaps, one which makes their life interesting to themselves and helpful to their neighbors. To achieve that kind of adjustment, however, a first necessity is self-acceptance, the organization of one's life on the basis of one's own personal and racial heritage.

The Normal Adjustment to the Handicaps of the Diaspora

What Jews need, therefore, to normalize their life in the Diaspora, is an active self-identification with the life of the Jewish people and its civilization. Without a Jewish homeland that would be difficult, to the point, perhaps, of impossibility. For no minority has sufficient control over the conditions of its own life to apply its ideals in the creation of distinctive social, economic and cultural institutions. Jewish ideals thus tend in the Diaspora to become mere verbal abstractions, a way of speaking rather than a way of living. Not being able to preserve the life-patterns of the Jewish past, and not

having sufficient control over the conditions of his life to create new economic and social institutions, the Diaspora Jew must look to the creative center of Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael for a demonstration of Jewish social and ethical ideals at work in a modern environment. If he is permitted to share in the development of that life, and enabled to assimilate something of its culture, he will then discover wherein the principles it embodies are also relevant to the conditions of American life. He will endeavor, in cooperation with Gentiles of good will, to apply the wisdom aquired by his contact with the life in Eretz Yisrael to the solution of problems arising in America. He will also find ways of utilizing his American cultural experience to the advantage of Jewish life both in the Diaspora and the homeland. This will give him a sense of self-respect and emotional security which will normalize his life.

Clearly then the cause of normalization of Jewish life in the Diaspora cannot be served by merely bringing a handful of Jews to Eretz Yisrael and leaving the rest to their fate. It must be solved by strengthening the conception of Israel as one people throughout the world, with its center in the homeland. Conscious efforts and an effective program are needed to strengthen the ties between the homeland and the Diaspora and to give expression to their common concern with the advancement of the Jewish people and its civilization.

The Question from the Viewpoint of Our Relations to Mankind

But there is yet another point of view from which we may discuss the normality of the effort to maintain Jewish life in the Diaspora, the point of view of its value to mankind. We do not believe that any people exists primarily for the sake of mankind, just as we do not believe that any individual exists primarily for the sake of the nation. We believe in Hillel's dictum, "If I am not for myself, who shall be for me?" But we also believe in the second part of that dictum which adds: "If I am only for myself, what am I?" An individual who lacks loyalty to other individuals, can never achieve the sort of human personality that makes life worth living; a people that is not aware of its responsibilities to mankind cannot achieve a civilization worth preserving.

The Jewish people, early in its history, developed that awareness. That is why Judaism became a *religious* civilization It was permeated with the consciousness of the nation's responsibility to the God of all mankind. Our people thus early perceived the truth that normal life is impossible for any nation until it is possible for every nation. That is the essence of the Messianic conception of the simultaneous redemption of Israel and of all mankind. The spiritual significance of Zionism is that it translates this ideal from the realm of dream and fantasy, in which it dwelt during the Middle Ages, into a realistic program of action.

So again we ask: In the light of this responsibility of our people to contribute to the welfare of mankind generally, is the existence of the Diaspora a help or a detriment? And again it becomes apparent that only by the interaction of the Homeland and the Diaspora can Israel make the best use of its spiritual and material resources.

The Diaspora an Antidote to Jewish Chauvinism

Every nationalism is tempted to deteriorate into chauvinism. In order to attach the individual in loyalty to the nation, there develops a tendency to make the interests of the nation, and particularly of those who govern the nation, supreme over all other human interests. It

was only when the Prophets interpreted for the people the experience of exile, that ethical montheism, in all its universal implications, became the religion of the Jewish people. Life in the Diaspora broadens the social horizon by contact with other cultures and reveals the fundamental identity of all human interests, the essential kinship of all humanity. It therefore enables the people to view life in a truer perspective, one that corrects the myopia of national chauvinism.

But, it may be objected, has the Yishuv displayed that tendency to chauvinism in any marked degree? With the exception of certain extremists among the dissident groups who were infected by the violence and brutality from which they had suffered at the hands of others, the Yishuv has indeed shown an unusual devotion to universal ethical ideals. It must be remembered, however, that the ideologies on which the social program of the Yishuv has been based, were conceived in the Diaspora and brought to Palestine by the Jewish settlers. Hess and Krochmal, Pinsker and Ahad Ha'am, Boruchov and Gordon, Herzl and Brandeis were among the intellectual sponsors of those ideals which have since taken root and flourished in the soil of the Homeland.

But the question is: will that universal social idealism continue to flourish without the cultural cross-fertilization of close contact with other peoples through a Jewish Diaspora? As life becomes settled in any country, there is a tendency for its social forms to congeal and lose something of their responsiveness to changing human needs. The momentum of the ideals that gave rise to the fundamental institutions of the nation wanes. The United States, for example, was born in a revolution whose manifesto was the Declaration of Indepedence with its affirmation that "all men are created equal." Yet the Daughters of the American Revolution, who boast of their descent from the Revolutionary heroes, are most flagrant offenders against the principle of equal rights for all citizens. We do not say that the same development need necessarily take place in Eretz Yisrael, but we do say that it is a possibility, and that contact with Jews of the Dispersion, who live in the midst of other peoples and other civilizations, will be a safeguard against such a deterioration of Jewish nationalism.

The Diaspora as an Influence for Disseminating Jewish Ideals

And as for the Diaspora's benefiting by its linkage with the Homeland, that should by now be obvious. We have seen what the spiritual dangers of the Diaspora are, how the necessity of living as a minority among a majority that is alien to Judaism tends to generate an inferiority complex in the Jew. That complex manifests itself in a variety of ways: in Jewish "self-hate," in attempted flight by way of assimilation, in compensating delusions of grandeur, or in the attempt to escape from harsh realities by the creation of a spiritual ghetto and absorption in an exotic, mystical Orthodoxy, irrelevant to the crucial issues of modern life.

We have also seen that the cure indicated by this diagnosis is the self-acceptance which comes from identification with the Jewish people and its civilization. Thus the spiritual tie with Eretz Yisrael is indispensable to the mental hygiene of the Diaspora Jew.

But this must be added. Whenever a handicapped individual achieves a healthy adjustment to his handicap, his effort to triumph over it develops in him unusual powers. The fact that Judaism is challenged in the Diaspora, that it is "hard to be a Jew," makes it necessary for the Diaspora Jew to articulate the values of Judaism, if only for his own guidance and

comfort. He cannot, as in Eretz Yisrael, take his Judaism as a matter of course. He must assure himself that it has value. He must develop a philosophy of Judaism. Not being able to maintain every tradition and conform to every Jewish custom, he is forced to assess and evaluate them critically.

But not his Jewish tradition only. If he is not to have a split personality, he cannot accept those elements in the contemporary American culture which do not accord with the values of his Jewish heritage. He is therefore compelled to take his Americanism more seriously, reflectively and critically than members of the majority group in America. He must develop also a philosophy of Americanism, which can be of great value to American civilization. And of course, the same relationship would obtain between Jews and the dominant group in the population of other democratic countries. He thus serves the cause of mankind by being an influence against national chauvinism and for international cooperation and social justice wherever he lives.

Conclusion—the Complementary Functions of Homeland and Diaspora

It thus follows that, by a conception of the peoplehood of Israel which assumes that it will continue to have both a Homeland and a Diaspora, the two types of Jewish community life may each be conceived of as having a special spiritual function complementary to that of the other. Eretz Yisrael will provide the antidote to the Jewish inferiority complex and prevent Judaism from deteriorating into a way of speaking rather than a way of living. The Diaspora will articulate the significance of the Jewish civilization that is rooted in Eretz Yisrael and interpret it to mankind. It will, at the same time, prevent life in Eretz Yisrael from sinking into automatism, from becoming narrow, provincial and smug. Spiritually, therefore, as well as politically, economically, and culturally, the Diaspora cannot be regarded as expendable. It is not an abnormality, since it contributes to the material and spiritual health of *kelal yisrael*, including the Jewry of Eretz Yisrael, and to that of all mankind.

Religion and Theology

By MAX WIENER

THE question of cultural pluralism — its meaning and desirability — has been discussed in this country more than in any other. Our attitude toward it is involved in our general attitude toward humanity. If we conceive of the greatness of mankind as dependent upon the uniqueness of each group's characteristic contribution to the totality of human achievement, then we must regard cultural variety as an asset. The best interest of humanity does not involve cultural uniformity but rather the combined effort of the various human groups to produce the best and noblest of which each is capable.

Differences in Religion as a Source of Conflict

In respect to literature and art, learning and science and many other human activities, the value of cultural differentiation has hardly ever been doubted. The educated individual of the Roman Empire or of the later Middle Ages was conscious of being shaped by various cultural elements without giving up his character as a Gaul or Frenchman, a Greek or an Italian. Even when Herder, the German poet and thinker, 150 years ago, conceived the idea of a universal literature ("*Weltliteratur*"), he only expressed the conviction that there was a common de-

nominator of spiritual values. It may be a mistake to assume that, on this spiritual basis alone, world solidarity and peace can be solidly established. But it is undeniable that, if the ethical relationships between peoples and between the members of different cultural groups within the same people are to be improved, we need an idea of humanity that sanctions differences.

This leads us to a consideration of the task of religion in relation to human solidarity. As long as a religious communion claims to be the sole possesssor of the highest philosophical truth, it creates by this exclusiveness a great danger to that brotherly solidarity which the most advanced stages of religious belief have always promised. It is not necessary to dwell at length on the paradox that the great monotheistic systems, despite their honest belief in God as the Creator and Father of all men, have been sources of extreme intolerance, persecution and cruelty. We still feel the after-effects of the religious conflicts of those times when the ecclesiastical authorities exerted a dominant influence, so that we are frequently impelled to question whether or not the "good-will" preached by religion is enough to overcome antagonistic sentiments between dissenting faiths.

The psychological reasons why most attempts of religious communities to achieve interfaith goodwill are condemned to failure are obvious. If religion congeals into dogmatic theology which pretends to possess the only clue to bliss and salvation, the religious idea, far from working towards understanding love and genuine humanity, necessarily becomes a highly efficacious means of stirring up mutual distrust and aversion, even enmity and hate. French philosophers, in the "Age of Reason," in their effort to create an atmosphere of freedom of thought, pointed to the deepest obstacle to mutual understanding. They said it was unbelievable that God should punish people whose minds could not recognize presupposed verities, that it was impossible to compel oneself to believe what one's intellect was unable to accept.

Why Skepticism and Sentimental Toleration Are Not Enough

We no longer live in an era of burning interest in theology. But tradition and the emotions, transmitted through many generations are so heavy a burden upon most of the people who constitute the various religious groups, that they regard the dissent of other groups as antagonism. It sounds noble for adherents of one faith solemnly to beseech their brethren of a different religion to overlook the peculiarities of their cult and to emphasize above all what all believers in God have in common. Such appeals may have a certain measure of success where the ethical significance of a creed stands in the fore. And yet should we not be set thinking, when we read, over the gate of a synagogue, Malachi's words (obviously intended to remind the non-Jewish passerby): "Have we not all *one* father? Hath not *one* God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" Or a similar inscription exhorting other people to believe in our good will towards them? These appeals seem to imply confidence that belief in one God necessarily leads to universal good will. Men may practically overcome their antipathy for the strange and reveal brotherly love,—but it is hard to decide whether they do so because their religion has educated them to a charity that makes no discrimination against persons of another religion, or whether their adherence to a particular faith has been unable to injure their inborn goodness.

Historically speaking, tolerance did not appear until a certain indifference to dogmatic views—even to religion as such—

became influential. But indifference to religion can obviously not establish a sound basis for a sincere cooperation among various religious groups. If we still believe in religion as a power in and over our souls and consequently as a factor in human interrelationship, we must eliminate the dangers resulting from theological rigidity and must achieve a religious piety, undistorted by authoritarian dogma. This is particularly required if we want religion to be a conciliatory and humanizing force in life. We repeat that in this respect the course of the biblical faiths has been remarkably strange. On the one hand, they proclaim God's fatherhood, extending it to the whole of humanity; on the other, none of them is free from the effort to link this doctrine to an exclusive theological creed. That means that the gift which religion gives humanity, is withdrawn again by theology. It does not take medieval fanaticism to make men look askance at the adherents of other religions. A certain spiritual pride is sufficient. The desire to make converts, to save souls, the condescension toward the unbeliever and even the mere conviction that the highest morality and genuine culture are inseparably connected with ones own "true belief" must produce religious antagonisms.

How can we break through this vicious circle? Neither by stressing the demand for tolerance nor by distinguishing between more and less essential teachings of religion and sacrificing the latter. Such adjustments, whenever attempted, have been tantamount to stripping religion of all but its ethical characteristics, and thus have tended to dry up the profoundest source of its power.

The Religious Experience Distinguished From Its Interpretation in Theology

The religious selfconsciousness, finds itself confronted with an overwhelming, but mysterious Reality to which it has to subject itself, without being able to penetrate its nature. Though we trust in the Holy One as the Creator of all good, the Governor of the universe, our Refuge and Redeemer—our innermost feeling rejects the notion that we have any knowledge of God's ways and works which is comparable to our knowledge of the objects and events of our natural surroundings. The realm of the beyond, the transcendental, though we firmly believe in its existence and power over us, cannot be open to our comprehension. All prayer expresses this two-sidedness of the religious emotion: the certainty of the divine omnipresence and man's utter inability to understand how and why God works as He works. Genuine, unfalsified piety does not mistake religious verity for science which deals with objective facts. He who is really devoted to God feels that this very devotion veils more than it unveils, that it is qualified to make man exceedingly humble and modest. He will not indulge in intellectual pride, but will preserve a fruitful doubt, concerning articles of faith and ways of adoration, when these lay claim to uncovering God's secrets completely. In their most significant and revealing utterances, men of creative religious genius, have always emphatically affirmed that no human intellect can conceive the divine. To be sure, they set up values and make demands in God's name; but in doing so, they appeal to a human mind which has to interpret and to actualize the holy in the world of the ordinary.

Any kind of living piety contains enough of mystical sentiment to make one feel that silence concerning God is often a more adequate manifestation of communion with Him than any sagaciously systematized formula of quasi-scientific research. And if we cannot remain silent, but must speak, we should never forget

that every word or doctrine, dogma, symbol or article of faith is nothing but a human attempt to state in rational terms what, according to its very essence, is hidden from us.

Theological teachings, religious ceremonies, sacraments and rites have their *raison d'etre* in all systems of faith. Yet those who adhere to them should remain conscious that they are not means by which God reveals His nature and the only way to salvation. Rather are they the inherited methods by which a historic community symbolizes the unknowable.

We are not here concerned with the practical question whether or not such an attitude is calculated to undermine traditional observance among the plain people who still are devoted to it. We want to call attention to the contradiction between any theology which pretends an infallible knowledge of the divine and religion which never tires of maintaining that such a claim cannot be conceded. We are not concerned with what historical criticism would have to say about the origin and development of the various theological systems. We take our position *within* the *religious* consciousness. From this viewpoint we arrive at the conclusion that religion itself, correctly interpreted, rejects any kind of *theology* that regards itself as *science*. A truly pious person does not arrogantly presume that *his* way to God is the only possible one. He hopes and he trusts in the Divine Mystery, though he cannot decipher its nature and knows that the awareness of this inability is an essential part of his religious sentiment.

Religious Experience as a Basis of Tolerance

This attitude paves the way to true tolerance. Under the rule of theology there can be no tolerance, at least none that is honest and sincere. Truth, in the absolute sense cannot tolerate dissent, particularly not a truth that is deemed the indispensable basis of life according to the Divine will. But by eliminating the claim to the possession of absolute truth from the demands of religion, we can acknowledge various religious systems as the adequate expressions of the reaction of members of particular groups to their experience of the holy. We can then, notwithstanding unlimited faithfulness to our own spiritual possessions, recognize other religious communities as our equals. We do not then inflict on the devotees of other religions, even in our inmost thought or feeling, the insult of *condescending* toleration. This is the soil on which *honest* and decent tolerance can thrive, an ethical attitude, dependent upon sincerity and true insight into the nature of belief, not on religious indifference or on a more or less hypocritical ignoring of the differences of the various groups.

This would lead to a position not unlike that which is revealed in the self-consciousness of a high national culture, when it recognizes and appreciates the meaning and value of other cultures, perhaps very remote from its own. We believe in the possibility of a cooperative association of all the nations of the human race. Such a covenant can work only if every individual people is sound enough not to be obsessed with the conceit of its inherent superiority over all the other members of the human family. Any national culture can exist beside any other, if all are unaffected by that arrogance and immoderate pride, from which men derive the justification for contemning or even undermining other cultures than their own.

The same holds true of religions. Goodwill and human friendliness are no substitutes for the unqualified conviction that he who does not share my attitude to specific theological formulae and cus-

toms, may nevertheless be just as good a person as I am and just as acceptable to God. We have to distinguish strictly between *theological systems,* which are powerful sources of separation and discord, and *authentic religiosity* which, by its very character, is the strongest impulse to unite and reconcile all human beings in God. The existence of a variety of religious communities is a historic fact which either can contribute to the spiritual wealth of mankind or can work as a highly efficient force making for mutual distrust and destruction. But religious differentiation has played and is still playing a tragic part wherever theology asserts itself as the infallible master and guide of piety. Such differentiation may produce real benefits and make a basic contribution to an all-embracing social solidarity, once our minds as well as our religious instincts clearly distinguish between the pure experience of the divine and the theological philosophy in which the intellect interprets that experience.

The Task of the Religious Educator

The most urgent task of the religious educator should be to make this distinction the basis of all educational effort. We demand today that schools all over the world should be used to disseminate international understanding and to combat chauvinism. Such an endeavor can be successful only if youth is given an insight into the many-sidedness of human culture. Patriotism will not be weakened by that insight. The goal of religious education is similar, though the way may be more arduous. For men have lived too long under the dominating influence of the conviction that there is no truth outside the doctrines and rules of their particular community.

But what is difficult is not necessarily impossible. It will indeed require the utmost seriousness and ability on the part of the educator, and an approach both tactful and reverent to show that the humility man owes to his God forbids him to believe in the most High as an object of ordinary experience. From this central viewpoint we can proceed to discuss the historical and psychological reasons why our own or any other group explains the divine in the particular way that it does.

Thus theology will appear in its provisional character, as a human endeavor and not as a final revelation of the Divine Mystery. Society will be free from a dangerous obstacle on the road to sincere solidarity. Not by the sort of tolerance that tends to weaken truly religious devotion can the idea of universal brotherhood be brought to realization. This can be accomplished only by leading man to look into his own heart. He will find therein that the hidden God for whom he yearns does not make Himself manifest by scientific formulas and that, therefore, no learned theory of the divine is authorized to erect a wall between a man and his neighbor.

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 10)

Religious News Service releases:

(1) Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyons, commenting on the wave of strikes in France, recently declared that his country was in a state of sin because French workers were not receiving a living wage.

(2) The United Lutheran Church recently installed the Rev. Harold C. Letts as its first secretary for social action. Dr. Oscar F. Blackfelder, pastor of Reformation Church, prefaced the order of installation by declaring that "It is high time that the old line churches in America be heard on current social problems now confronting our nation."

Book Notes

BUBER'S MOSES

MOSES, By Martin Buber. East and West Library, London, England, 1946, 200 *pp.* 12/60 *shillings.*

TO reconstruct the life of a personality like Moses is a highly difficult task for a number of reasons, but especially for two. In the first place, the records we have of his life and achievements have been reworked by priest and prophet again and again in the course of many centuries. They all wanted to cover their own favorite ideas or interests with the authority of the great master. Second, we are all human beings. Even the greatest historians and scholars who devote their lives to reconstructing history are prone to select and emphasize particularly those features of the great personalities whom they love which they themselves appreciate. Buber would not be the deep Jewish thinker if he were an exception to this rule. His book *Moses* (Oxford, 1947) is a new myth or legend of Moses. Although all supernatural miracles of the *Pentateuch* are cut out of his biography, it is full of miracles. The greatest is that the Moses whose work Buber describes with so much love and lucidity looks like a photograph of Buber himself. He has nearly the same ideas and ideals which Buber holds essential for philosophy and Judaism. The traditional Moses has undergone a great many similar identifications in the eight centuries between Moses and Ezra so that his biblical portrait pictures not only himself but also the great religious leaders of Israel of later times.

Moses, says Buber, was neither a magician nor a visionary. He seems to derive from a largely Egyptianized section of the Hebrew people, but he was a good Hebrew and no Egyptian. Buber dismisses all miraculous elements of the narratives, the story of Moses' babyhood, the miracles in Egypt, at Mount Sinai and in the wilderness. These stem, he rightly remarks, from Elisha and his disciples. All the dicta, institutions and ideas which are vigorous, original, lofty and noble, Buber holds, are Mosaic. At the flaming bush Moses became aware of his call to deliver his people. The YHWH of Moses was not the fire and mountain god of the Kenites, but an advanced God of his fathers, the divine Leader, who guided Moses and Israel through the perils of the desert. Moses assembles his people revealing his mission. When he meets Pharaoh, he warns him like a prophet. When, after a series of natural calamities, such as locusts and hailstorm, a children's epidemic breaks out, Pharaoh shouts through the window: "Go forth."

Moses' plan was not only to deliver his people but to unify it and put it under the guidance of the divine King, whose messenger he was. For this purpose he transformed the Passover, an old shepherds' feast, into a common feast consecrated to the birth of a free people. After the lucky escape through the Red Sea Moses made a covenant between the God-King and the people, to which he gave the name of Israel, meaning "God rules." Before he started the ceremony he held the Eagle Speech: "Like a loving eagle-mother I brought you unto me. Be therefore unto me a kingdom of *kohanim* (retinue) and a peculiar treasure, for

the whole earth is mine." Then Moses held a unique blood-rite amidst a circle of twelve stones. He climbed with the elders upon the mountain. There they had a sacred meal facing the Royal Majesty, enthroned in the clouds. On returning, Moses saw that Aaron had made a visible symbol of God in the form of a bull Angry, he ordered his Levitical guard to kill the rioters. He withdrew into solitude to engage in prayer in which he became aware of YHWH's being a God of mercy and forgiveness. So he made himself a visible symbol, the throne of God, the Ark, and a meeting-tent where he met his Leader.

The Ten Commandments in their original shorter form were written down on tablets in Kadesh, exhibited to the people for some time and then put into the Ark. Moses forbade making images of God, who wanted to be seen only rarely and only by his elected people, but not to be made permanently visible. The Sabbath, originally a day of bad omen connected with the moon, was transformed by Moses to a weekend day of joy, of social, national and cosmic rest. In Kadesh, where the people tried agriculture in addition to cattle-raising, Moses also gave laws for the land. The old seventh year of fallow-lying became a sabbatical year. Every seventh year the land should be equally redistributed; the slaves should go free. Even the conception of seership, an old Semitic institution, was reformed by Moses. Balaam pronounced its ideals. There should be no magic or sorcery in Israel.

Moses' ideal was that all the people should be prophets so that an intermediary would not be necessary. Korah misunderstood this He thought that Israel was already a holy people and denied Moses' authority. In order to preserve the Covenant, Moses destroyed the rioters as he did those who had taken part in the idolatrous and licentious cult of Baal Peor. The great tragedy of Moses' life was that he had no successor worthy of him. Joshua was only a fighter, no "man of spirit." Therefore he was forced to separate the offices of priest from that of leader. He hoped that some day a man like him would appear, a theo-political leader. So he died a lonely man.

Buber's story of Moses is too wonderful, too modern, too idealistic to be true. I cannot go here into the details. I will limit myself to some questions:

1) Why did Moses order the Levites to kill the sinners, sparing Aaron, and then ask God for forgiveness? If that was an afterthought, why did he do the same after Korah and Baal-Peor? All that proves that Moses was of tougher stuff than Buber assumes.

2) Is it probable that the weekend rest was conceived and introduced for wandering nomadic tribes who had to rest when they found an oasis and keep their cattle day by day? Is that not rather a product of settlement?

3) Should Moses really have given laws about the equal redistribution of land before the tribes had conquered the land? Was Moses a visionary utopian or a practical statesman?

4) If Moses really forbade all images of things earthly and heavenly, why did he himself make an Ark with cloud-imitating cherubim?

5) If all the good ideas which the genius of Israel gave mankind stemmed from the brain of one man, then we would have a great miracle. Why deny the other miracles and maintain this?

Although Buber's Moses is not the last word of research, I like his book very much. It is wonderfully positive, constructive, well-weighed and stimulating—scientific research of the best kind. It gives a charming and consistent portrait of Moses painted by the brush and colors, of a great contemporary Jewish sage.

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